



**Donald's "Quote of the Month"**

*"Stop trying to reinvent the wheel. Find out who in the world is best at what you do...and learn from them."*

Greetings and welcome. This month's Management Newsletter delivers many helpful business insights, one heart-warming piece *and* our September Trivia Quiz, with semi-valuable prizes. The entire Newsletter will take about 7 minutes to read.

**1. What are you learning from your competitors?**

(time to read this article is about 60 seconds)

Life is free research when we're paying attention. Are you learning all you can from your competitors? What do they do well? Where do they screw up? Who's the best in the world at what you do? What can you learn from them about what to do...and about what not to do?

- 1. Do you know who's the best in the world at selling what you sell at the **lowest price**?** What can you learn from them about efficiency, lean processes, logistics, controlling overhead, volume selling, promotion and increasing productivity?
- 2. Do you know who's the best in the world at selling what you sell at the **highest price**?** What can you learn from them about adding more value, building relationships with affluent customers, design and service excellence, making it not all about price and building a premium Brand.
- 3. Do you know who's the best in the world at selling what you sell in **different ways**?** What can you learn from them about different sales or distribution models, proactive marketing over the internet, improving your website or creating a whole new business model?

We can also learn from world-class businesses in completely different fields. What can we learn about creating a winning culture from Disney or about a passionate commitment to quality from Lexus? What can we learn about logistics from Wal-Mart? What can we learn about passion and joy from the guy on the street corner who sells more hot dogs than anyone else by joyfully creating an extraordinary customer experience?

We don't have to reinvent the wheel...there are hundreds of ways that we can improve and grow our business just by studying the excellence of others. So, what will you commit to do to start thinking globally, finding out who's best, learning from them and growing your bottom line?

**2. This one has nothing to do with management or marketing...but everything to do with making your heart smile. **You've got to take 40 seconds to read this:****

(time to read this article is about 40 seconds)

Every once in a while I come across something that simply needs to be shared...even though it has little to do with my usual work in management and marketing excellence. Please take 40 seconds to see the wonderful story and photos of a 100 year old giant tortoise who has "adopted" an orphaned baby hippo in Mombasa, Kenya. This will make your heart smile. This piece can be found at the end of this Newsletter.

### 3. How many people are you trying to manage?

(time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

Following a recent presentation to furniture retailers on "**The 8 essential steps to finding, leading and keeping the best staff.**", I received an email from one attendee saying, "*Great ideas Donald...however, with tracking and dealing with every single employee (about 45) while running the business and making and implementing other business decisions, where do I find the time?*" ...signed, Margaret.

I was astounded. How could anyone believe that they can effectively manage 45 people? So, I emailed her back, "*Margaret, you're absolutely correct. You can't. Nobody can effectively manage, train, develop, challenge, inspire, mentor and support 45 people. That's why you must create a management structure in your business. For example, you should have an office manager, a store sales manager, a warehouse and delivery (logistics) manager and, perhaps, a combined buyer and merchandising manager. These 4 people report directly to you. You are developing, challenging, mentoring and managing them and they, in turn, are developing and managing their specific team.*"

Margaret emailed back, "*Thanks Donald, you're right. It's so obvious, so simple...I guess that's why you get the big bucks.*"

Are you trying to manage too many people? It's generally thought that 6 to 8 is the limit. If your number is higher than that, what structure can you create to spread the load and grow your best people, so that they can help you grow your business...or your department?

### 4. Here's where you can attend one of my public events this Fall:

(time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

Most of my speaking and coaching work is for specific companies or Associations where the general public is not allowed in. But this Fall we have bookings from a number of Chambers of Commerce and the Alberta Government, each of whom is opening my session to one and all, at a very reasonable price. Here are the locations...

- a) On **Sept. 30th and Oct 2nd** I'll be delivering my transformational one-day management "Boot Camps" in **Edmonton and Calgary.**

If you're located in Alberta and are a business owner or senior manager, or if you have Branch Offices in those cities, this is an extraordinary opportunity to rethink, refocus and re-energize your business for just \$125 (including breakfast, lunch, parking and a complete Implementation Handout). Why the amazing low price? Because these events are being sponsored by the Government of Alberta.

This is a rare opportunity...don't miss it. For registration details go to [www.manufacturinginnovation.ca](http://www.manufacturinginnovation.ca).

- b) Management Keynote speech, plus informal business coaching sessions in **Parry Sound, Ontario on Oct. 22nd.** For registration details call 1-800-461-4261.
- c) Management Keynote speech, plus informal business coaching sessions in **Charlottetown, PEI on Oct. 23rd.** For registration details visit this website: <http://www.charlottetownchamber.com/eventdetail.asp?eventID=68>
- d) Management Keynote speech, plus informal business coaching sessions in **Summerside, PEI on Oct. 24th.** For registration details call 1-902-436-9651.
- e) **Industry-specific:** HortEast is Atlantic Canada's premier trade show and conference Landscape and Garden Centre related businesses. I will be delivering a Keynote speech, a Management VIP Seminar and informal business coaching sessions at this **Halifax, Nova Scotia conference on Nov. 25th.** Visit [www.horteast.ns.ca](http://www.horteast.ns.ca) or call 1-866-383-4711 for details on how to register.

## 5. Bits and Pieces:

(time to read this section is about 60 seconds)

**Item #1:** Here's a sign I found recently in the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas,

**The contents of all trash receptacles on the property are sorted for recycling. So, feel free to deposit your recyclables anywhere.**

Are you going out of your way to make life easy for your customers? What could you do to make doing business with you a little less stressful, less complicated or more convenient?

**Item #2:** Never let any one customer become such a big percentage of your total sales that they can dictate the terms of your relationship, or even put you out of business. I recently met a lady who did let that happen and she lost her company when one customer became 60% of her business...and then squeezed her to death.

**Item #3:** Here's one to try on your friends. Ask them to guess what three competitive events had the most expensive ticket prices at the recent Beijing Olympics. The answer...#1 basketball. #2 swimming. #3 table tennis. They'll never guess "table tennis".

**Item #4:** Believe it or not, the raw material content of the average new car is only 7% of the total selling price.

**Item #5:** Way back in 1998, low priced retailer, Zellers, dropped their positioning statement, "**Where the lowest price is the law!**" when they realized that they could not compete with Wal-Mart on price. But, 10 years later, apparently nobody at Zellers has noticed that this defunct value statement is still emblazoned across the side of their Zellers store in Bracebridge, Ontario. How can this be...10 years and nobody notices or nobody cares?

We all laugh when we see businesses screw up like this. But, we should all look at our own businesses to see what we should have fixed years ago...and haven't. What might that be in your business?

## 6. Could you tell your value story and 'grab' your customers in just a few memorable words?

(time to read this article is about 45 seconds)

When you truly understand your customers and your compelling value story, you can 'grab' them and clearly differentiate yourself in just a few memorable words.

ING Bank reinvented banking in North America. Their "no branches" business model allows them to pay higher interest on deposits and charge lower rates on mortgages. They're also known for their aversion to hitting their customers with extra fees and penalties...and for their consistent and innovative advertising.

I recently saw a great ING ad on the side of a bus that said simply...

**"ING BANK...ALL CARROT -- NO STICK!"**

This is brilliant. For people who feel they're being "beaten" by their bank, this is a real grabber.

M&M Meat Shops, the great Canadian retailer of prepared meals grabs busy Moms, who are too busy to shop, with their value positioning statement, "**Hundreds of meal ideas...just one aisle.**"

Southwest Airlines grabs all of us who are tired of advertised low fares that skyrocket when all the hidden fees and surcharges are added in. We feel that it's deceitful...and we hate it. Good old Southwest's new slogan is, "**Low fares...no hidden fees**" Once again...simple and brilliant.

So, the question for your business is, do you have a value positioning that is so simple, clear and compelling that you could put it out there in just seven words or less? In a time-compressed, five second sound bite world, this is a powerful marketing tool.

## 7. Our quick Quiz of the Month:

(time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

"Thanks" to all of you who answered our August Quiz, which was, *"Name any of the 12 countries that sent competitors to the Olympics that have a smaller population than the 91,000 people who attended the opening ceremony."*

**The answer** could have been Andorra, Antigua, The BVI's, Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Grenada, Monaco, Palau, St. Kitts & Nevis, San Marino, Seychelles, or Tuvalu.

Congratulations to Jeff Morton of Ford of Canada. He takes home our Human Marketing DVD Seminar as his prize.

### This month's Quiz Question:

Someone has to be the biggest or the best in the world at what you do. Why not you? When I ask clients this question, the usual answer is that they're located in some small city, or less powerful nation and could never be a global competitor.

You can be the biggest of the best in the world, wherever you are. For example, guess which country has the world's largest swimming pool? It's not Russia, it's not Dubai and it's not in Michael Phelps' back yard in the USA.

**Guess which unlikely country has the world's largest swimming pool** and you may win one of my excellent Video Management Seminars with step-by-step Implementation Guide.

Send your guess to Sharen Skene, our wonderful Director of Marketing, at [sharen@donaldcooper.com](mailto:sharen@donaldcooper.com). Each correct answer received will go into the 'pot' and **one winner will be randomly selected before** our next Newsletter mailing. The winner will receive his or her choice of any of our excellent DVD Seminars.

## 8. What do good employees really want?

(time to read this article is about 60 seconds)

There's lots of confusion about this, so here's the "straight goods". According to most surveys there are 7 things that really good people want in a working environment.

**Note:** This is not what average people want...and for sure it's not what sloths want. This is what top performers who will move your business forward want.

- 1) A challenging job with opportunity to grow. Good people want a challenge. They want to grow themselves and help you grow the business. They also want the training required to do that.
- 2) Clear, honest & consistent communication. They want to know where the business is going, how it's doing and how their work contributes to all of that.
- 3) A positive, uplifting environment with values they can be proud of. Good people will not stay in a depressing, stressful or unethical environment.
- 4) Recognition of performance. Good people want to know that their hard work is noticed and appreciated.
- 5) Money. Pay more and expect more.
- 6) A benefit menu & pension participation. This will be important to people who want to make a career with you.
- 7) Work-life balance. Most emotionally healthy people need and want some balance in their lives. This doesn't necessarily mean balance every day or every week because in most businesses there are busy times that require "all hands on deck" for some pretty wacky hours. Good people realize this...they just don't want it to be all the time.

So, how does your business rate in delivering the 7 things that good people really want? Remember, the best people have to work for somebody...it's just that you have to deserve them.

## 9. That's all for this month:

(time to read this section is about 15 seconds)

Thanks for all of your great feedback and suggestions. We especially love to hear of your successes using our insights.

Don't forget to visit our Free Articles section on our website for lots more valuable articles on how to sell more, manage smarter, grow your bottom line...and have a life.

Also, let us know what you'd like to hear more about...or less about. And, do send us your stories and examples of great, horrible or just plain bizarre business practices that you find in your travels.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'D' and a horizontal line under the 'nald' part.

Donald Cooper, MBA  
*Certified Speaking Professional*

## The Hippopotamus and the Tortoise:

Much of life can never be explained but only witnessed...



**NAIROBI, KENYA:** A baby hippopotamus that survived the tsunami waves on the Kenyan coast has formed a bond with a giant male century-old tortoise in an animal facility in the port city of Mombasa, Kenya.

The baby hippo, nicknamed Owen and weighing about 300 kilograms (650 pounds), was swept down the Sabaki River into the Indian Ocean, then forced back to shore when tsunami waves struck the Kenyan coast on December 26, 2004 before wildlife rangers rescued him.



**"It is incredible. A century old male tortoise has adopted a less-than-a-year-old hippo and the tortoise seems to be very happy with being a 'mother'." reports ecologist Paula Kahumbu.**



**"After it was swept away and lost its mother, the hippo was traumatized. It had to look for something to be a surrogate mother. Fortunately, it landed on the tortoise and established a strong bond."**



**"The hippo is a young baby, he was left at a very tender age and by nature, hippos are social animals that like to stay with their mother for four years," she explained.**



**"They swim, eat, and sleep together," the ecologist added. "The hippo follows the tortoise exactly the way it followed its mother.**

**If somebody approaches the tortoise, the hippo becomes aggressive, as if protecting its biological mother," Kahumbu added.**





**We could all learn a lesson from these two creatures. "Look beyond our differences and we will find a way to walk the path together."**

**Be kind to each other!  
Kindest regards...Donald Cooper.**